27.   A fabric element for use in a system comprising a first fabric and a plurality of devices coupled to the first fabric by Fibre Channel connections, the fabric element comprising:

a plurality of ports, each port adapted to be coupled to a device by a Fibre Channel connection;

a storage medium for storing a definition of a first configuration including at least one zone, each zone including at least one device as a member of the zone; and

a logic device coupled to the plurality of ports and to the storage medium, for, responsive to the definition of the first configuration, restricting communications for devices coupled to the plurality of ports.

33.   A computer readable medium containing software for logically organizing a plurality of devices coupled to a first fabric by Fibre Channel connections, the software for instructing a processor to perform the steps of:

accessing a definition of a first configuration including at least one zone, each zone including at least one device as a member of the zone; and

responsive to the definition of the first configuration, restricting communications between the devices coupled to the first fabric.

Please add new claims 47-50 as follows:

47.   A Fibre Channel device for use in a Fibre Channel Fabric, the fabric coupling a plurality of external devices, the fabric configured into at least two zones, where the external devices are allowed to exchange data packets only with external devices in the same zone, an external device querying for address information when coupled to the fabric, the Fibre Channel device comprising:

a Fibre Channel port for receiving an address information query from an external device;

a storage medium for storing a first configuration including at least two zones;

a simple name server coupled to said Fibre Channel port and said storage medium for responding to the address information query with external devices address information only for external devices in the same zone as the external device providing the address information query.

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48.   A Fibre Channel switch for use in a Fibre Channel Fabric, the fabric coupling a plurality of external devices, the fabric configured into at least two zones, where the external devices are allowed to exchange data packets only with external devices in the same zone, an external device querying for address information when coupled to the fabric, the Fibre Channel switch comprising:

a Fibre Channel port for receiving an address information query from an external device;

a storage medium for storing a first configuration including at least two zones;

a simple name server coupled to said Fibre Channel port and said storage medium for responding to the address information query with external devices address information only for external devices in the same zone as the external device providing the address information query.

49.   The Fibre Channel switch of claim 48, wherein said simple name server includes:

a CPU module; and

software executing on said CPU module to provide said simple name server functionality.

50.   A Fibre Channel network comprising:

a plurality of external Fibre Channel devices; and

a Fibre Channel fabric coupling said plurality of external Fibre Channel devices, wherein the fabric is configured into at least two zones, where the external Fibre Channel devices are allowed to exchange data packets only with external Fibre Channel devices in the same zone and the external Fibre Channel devices query for address information when coupled to the fabric wherein said Fibre Channel fabric includes:

a Fibre Channel port for receiving an address information query from an external Fibre Channel device;

a storage medium for storing a first configuration including at least two zones; and

a simple name server (SNS) coupled to said Fibre Channel port and said storage medium for responding to the address information query with external Fibre

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